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INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 5978
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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7145
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4402
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1685
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1687
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 3899
RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4316
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 8873
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SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY RESULTS

¶11. (U) Summary: Although preliminary election results show that the majority of Bolivians voted against departmental autonomy, four eastern departments solidly voted in its favor. Early results also indicate that President Morales' Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party won around 52 percent of Constituent Assembly representatives, followed by Podemos with 23 percent and the National Unity party with 4 percent, with the vote largely divided along east-west lines.

Observers reported an orderly, peaceful process, although the MAS has begun to posture for post-election challenges based on fraud. Santa Cruz declared its autonomy late July 2, and along with the rest of the "media luna" is celebrating its "victory." Most view the elections as a win for Morales, but the renewed east-west rift and the MAS' lack of absolute control over the Assembly may press Morales to consider building consensus. End summary.

¶12. (U) Based on preliminary election results, it appears that western Bolivia (the departments of La Paz, Oruro, Potosi, Cochabamba, and Chuquisaca) rejected departmental autonomy, while the eastern lowlands (Santa Cruz, Tarija, Beni, and Pando) voted solidly in its favor. Nationally, early estimates show 56 percent of voters oppose autonomy and 44 percent support it.

¶13. (U) Early results, although highly speculative, indicate that President Morales' Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party won around 52 percent of Assembly representatives (135 of 255 total), which constitutes a majority but falls short of the 170 representatives needed to control the Assembly. Podemos finished with around 23 percent (60 representatives), and the National Unity party finished with 4 percent (11 seats). Like autonomy, votes split largely along east-west lines, with the MAS dominating western departments but making significant gains in eastern Bolivia (Tarija and Santa Cruz) as compared to the December elections.

¶14. (U) OAS and domestic observers cited an orderly, peaceful process, with only one reported conflict. In Sucre, approximately 200 indigenous citizens marched to protest the Constituent Assembly process for failing to consider the autonomy of indigenous communities. Governmental authorities quickly responded and negotiated with protesters to find an alternative march route. Additionally, the MAS has begun to posture for post-election challenges based on fraud in Beni, Pando, and Santa Cruz. Around mid-day, Minister of the Presidency Juan de la Quintana alleged that under-age citizens were voting in those departments.

¶15. (U) Late July 2, large crowds gathered in Santa Cruz and the rest of the media luna (Beni, Pando and Tarija) to celebrate their

"victory" on autonomy. While Santa Cruz Prefect Ruben Costas declared his province's autonomy before thousands of jubilant supporters, other Santa Cruz leaders said they would take no further action now but place the issue in the hands of their Constituent Assembly representatives. In his late-night national address, Morales confirmed the MAS' victory but said he would respect the "yes" vote.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Most view the elections as a win for Morales, although results fall short of the MAS' stated expectations. The renewed east-west rift and the MAS' lack of absolute control over the Assembly provide some balance and may even press Morales to build consensus in the run-up to the Assembly, which will convene August 6. End comment.

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